

‘In future, only female teachers’:

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Abstract

This paper examines the employment of teachers at the school on the Ramahyuck mission station in eastern Victoria in the latter half of the nineteenth century. It demonstrates that both physical exhaustion as well as a difficult head missionary resulted in a frequent turnover of staff. Moreover, comments from the teachers supply us with an insight into the daily running of this school for Koorie children. Although the school was on a mission station, the files from the Board for the Protection of Aborigines do not allow a detailed reconstruction of the teaching history of the school, in contrast to the files of the Education Department, which do. By examining one file held at Public Record Office Victoria at length and contextualising it with cross-departmental correspondence, we can also gain an understanding of where the jurisdictions of each department lay, and of how both teachers and missionaries responded to these structures. The teacher-centred correspondence does not allow an insight into the responses from Koorie children, and thus their voices cannot be uncovered from these sources. The engagement of Koorie mothers in their children’s education is, however, evident within the file. In the historiography of mission stations in colonial Victoria, historians mostly use material written by missionaries, Church bodies or the Aboriginal Protection Board. This examination of the writings of teachers themselves reveals a new perspective on a Koorie school.

In October 1898, Friedrich Hagenauer, missionary at the Ramahyuck Aboriginal mission station near Sale and secretary of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, received a reply to a request that he had sent out to the Secretary of the Education Department in Melbourne. The reply read:

Sir, I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th ultimo requesting that, in future, only female teachers may be appointed to the charge of aboriginal schools, and to inform you that an effort will be made to give effect to your recommendation as far as practicable.[1]

This letter anticipated the end of male teachers on the Ramahyuck mission station. There had been a number of male teachers at the school, from its missionary beginnings through to its transformation to a half-time Rural School (No. 12) in April 1869, and finally to its classification as a full-time Common School (No. 1088) in April 1871.[2] Although the exclusive employment of female teachers was ultimately enforced, this directive did not put a stop to the frequent turnover of teachers at the school.

This paper will draw heavily from PROV files that contain the correspondence of teachers and potential teachers at the school with the Board of Education during the period from 1885 to 1901. In doing so, it will provide a general insight into the nature of education on Aboriginal mission stations beyond the single mission station examined here. In the historiography of mission stations in colonial Victoria, the most commonly used material is that of missionaries (such as official reports as well as official and personal letters); Church bodies (such as official reports); the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines (such as minutes of meetings and official reports); and governmental Royal Commissions. Few historians have engaged deeply with Department of Education material available at PROV.[3] Yet in addition to the more commonly used sources mentioned above, the PROV material provides information relating to the employment of teachers at the school, and records the teachers' comments on the achievements of their Koorie pupils. Within the PROV files, teachers often gave personal or health-related reasons for wishing to be transferred from the school; however, another reason that one could infer by cross-referencing some of these letters with missionary writings as well as government source material is that Hagenauer was himself a hard task master, and that his interfering contributed to the mental breakdown of a number of teachers. In examining a school for Koorie pupils, this article also provides some detailed insight into the relatively under-researched topic of Indigenous education in colonial Victoria.[4]

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[Rev. Friedrich and Mrs Hagenauer] [picture] a15496. Tom Humphrey [ca. 1908]. Courtesy of State Library of Victoria.

Ramahyuck as a Mission School

In 1859, one of the first baptisms of an Indigenous person was celebrated in the colony of Victoria. Nathanael Pepper, a Wotjobaluk youth, was baptised by Moravian missionaries at the Ebenezer mission station in the Wimmera, near present-day Dimboola.[5] Pepper's conversion was seen as evidence that Indigenous people could be transformed spiritually, and with this and future conversions it was expected that a certain level of European 'civilisation' would be obtained by the Aborigines. The missionaries who brought the Christian message to the Wotjobaluk, Friedrich Hagenauer and Friedrich Spieseke, were members of a German-based church that began their global missionary work in the 1730s and had established mission stations in Victoria from the mid-nineteenth century. The Moravians' success in Victoria amongst people generally believed not to be convertible to Christianity led to the Presbyterian Church joining together with the Moravians in 1862 to establish the Ramahyuck mission station in Gippsland, amongst the similarly unconverted Gunai/Kunai.[6] In the turmoil of the post-contact period, the social, political and economic spheres of the Gunai were ruptured, and they were forced to adapt to the post-contact environment, including to different forms of education and training for their young. The Gunai had for millennia passed on skills that were needed to live in their country and had instructed their children in Indigenous law and traditions. Their form of education was different from the formalised classroom-based education that the missionaries offered at the Ramahyuck mission, yet this did not stop children from attending the school, nor parents from showing interest in it. Like most Protestant missionary groups in the nineteenth-century, the Moravians placed great emphasis upon education and saw a mission school as a way both to indoctrinate children at a young age with the Christian faith and to win 'the hearts even

of heathen parents' as they observed the 'faithful care bestowed upon the children' by the missionaries.[7] The Moravians' agenda for education was tri-focal, in that it was intended to ensure 'symmetrical development through soul, mind and body'.[8] Thus, Moravian schooling was not academically focused, rather reformatory, its purpose being to effect social change by providing children with the skills and knowledge that would 'raise' them to the perceived level needed for assimilation into colonial society.

Hagenauer and his wife were initially the only missionaries present on the Ramahyuck mission station, and thus the only teachers. From the beginnings of the mission, numbers of Indigenous people fluctuated, as there was no law at that time compelling them to live on the reserve. In 1864, the Hagenauers were joined by Wilhelm Kramer and Wilhelm Kühne, two Moravian missionaries who had been sent out as part of a team to establish a mission station at Lake Kopperamanna near Lake Hope.[9] Due to a severe drought in the interior, the missionaries could not at first attempt the journey, and Kramer and Kühne were instead stationed at Ramahyuck, where they contributed to the running of the mission. Another two missionaries were stationed temporarily at Ebenezer. Kramer, who had gained teaching experience in Europe, was assigned the position of teacher. When the drought broke in 1866, Kramer and Kühne then left Ramahyuck for Lake Kopperamanna in South Australia, where they were to establish a mission amongst the Diyari. With a vacancy for a teacher at the school, Hagenauer combined his search for Kramer's replacement with his concern that some of the recently converted men needed to have good upstanding Christian wives. In 1867, he arranged for Mrs Anne Camfield to send some girls as potential wives from her 'Institution for Native and Half-Caste Children' at King George Sound in Western Australia, near present-day Albany. Bessy Flower was one of these young women, and thanks to her high level of formalised Western education she was placed in charge of the school,[10] where she taught writing and reading as well as religious studies.[11] Despite the aptitude that Flower demonstrated in the task, Hagenauer lamented that 'I want my old young friend Kramer to do it'.[12]

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[Students and others in front of Ramahyuck School] [picture] a13414. Gibbs & Bloch [ca. 1900]. Courtesy of State Library of Victoria.

In 1869, Hagenauer received his wish and Kramer was once again teaching at the school, having returned from the failed missionary attempt with the Diyari. Flower was therefore no longer a teacher at the school; rather, with her husband, Donald Cameron, a man of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry, she was in charge of Ramahyuck's boarding house. Hagenauer had originally envisaged this as a five-teacher boarding school in which the children would be instructed in a Christian environment.[13] The children, he suggested, 'would be very happy to live here, and the parents are willing to leave them here'.[14] In the nineteenth century, boarding or residential schools were established for Indigenous and non-European peoples in many British colonies, including in Canada where they had detrimental consequences for language and cultural maintenance.[15] Boarding schools reflected contemporary educational theories in which Indigenous people were expected to be 'turned into useful members of society'[16] through Christian instruction provided under the auspices of colonial

institutions. Although Flower and Cameron were originally seen as models for all 'heathen' residents to follow, they had fallen out of Hagenauer's favour by the mid-1870s and he removed Flower from her post, prompting her later to declare that 'I can never be happy on a mission station'.^[17] Flower remained the only Indigenous teacher at Ramahyuck during the nineteenth century.

A Government School

In 1871, the school at Ramahyuck became a government school, and thus Koorie pupils came under the same education system, with the same expectations, as all other pupils in the colony. In this year, there were seventy-four residents on the mission from a total of 492 inhabitants of the six government reserves and mission stations across Victoria.^[18] The historian Amanda Barry has argued that because Hagenauer was a firm supporter of education, he wished the Ramahyuck school to be brought under the control of the Department of Education to ensure regular inspections and also to ensure that teachers would 'look out to do [their] duty'.^[19] Hagenauer himself had had difficulties with some of his fellow missionaries, which had in turn led to difficulties with the Moravian Church headquarters in Germany.^[20] Thus, government inspection was not just a case of ensuring educational standards, it was also a case of asserting external secular control over missionary teachers. Or, in Hagenauer's words: 'The difficulty is this, if we have teachers who are not under the inspection of the inspectors they begin to slacken.'^[21] Hagenauer also wished the school to be brought under governmental control so that the salary of the teacher would henceforth be paid by the government, thereby reducing the running costs of the mission.^[22] Although missionaries generally preferred their pupils to be segregated from settler society, one of the consequences of the Ramahyuck mission school becoming a government school was that it was opened up to non-Indigenous children of the area. Hagenauer assessed the situation in the following characteristically racially arrogant language of the period: 'The selectors are glad to have a good school so handy, and for the black children it is of great benefit to mix at school and in the playground with those of a superior race.'^[23] Thus, in his description, the education of Indigenous children occurred both through formal teaching in the classroom as well as through the informal influence of role models in the playground. The *Education Act* of 1872 entitled all of the colony's children to receive free, compulsory, secular education, with instruction in religious education being permitted outside of secular class hours. Kramer continued as a teacher at Ramahyuck under the government system and instructed the children in rhymes, reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, grammar and geography.^[24] Under his supervision, the annual Board of Education examination results at Ramahyuck increased to 100% in 1872 and remained at this level for the next two consecutive annual inspections.^[25] Such outstanding results were a source of pride within religious circles,^[26] and a source of curiosity in scientific circles, where the mental ability of Indigenous students was rigorously discussed.^[27] The excellent examination results from Ramahyuck as well as from two other Aboriginal mission stations, Lake Tyers and Lake Condah, encouraged the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in their 1876 annual report to express the wish that all schools on the six mission and government reserves would come under the control of the Board of Education, with this wish finally coming to fruition in 1891.^[28]

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[Group standing in front of Church and State School, Ramahyuck Mission] [picture] a13412. Allan Studio [ca. 1900]. Courtesy of State Library of Victoria.

Kramer was transferred to the Ebenezer mission station in 1875, once again leaving Ramahyuck without a teacher. The position was filled in January 1876 by August Hahn, a Moravian missionary who had been sent out to Australia with his wife for the express purpose of working at Ramahyuck. However, the initially amicable relationship between Hahn and Hagenauer soon soured. Hagenauer complained that Hahn spent all his spare time in his room and, like Kramer, did not help as much as was needed. Hagenauer requested the Moravian administration in Germany to replace Hahn with a more suitable missionary.^[29] According to Barry, Hagenauer was concerned that Hahn was inciting the mission residents to become rebellious against the mission order.^[30] Hagenauer had indeed complained to headquarters that Hahn was turning the Aborigines against him, yet he placed the blame squarely with Hahn, who he claimed had committed fraud against the mission, and who, he vaguely claimed, had broken all the rules and regulations in regards to the Board of Education. This latter point led Hagenauer to fear that if the public were to hear of this the whole mission would be brought into disrepute.^[31] Exactly what Hahn did is not clear; however, with Hagenauer against him, he was forced to leave Ramahyuck in late 1879.^[32]

A replacement government teacher was sent to Ramahyuck in the form of Christopher Beilby, who was accompanied by his wife. Beilby was the first teacher at the school who had been neither an Indigenous resident nor a missionary. By this time, in the early 1880s, Hagenauer had known Beilby for ten years. Beilby had had his eye on the position of teacher since 1876, but while Hahn held the post he had requested it in vain.^[33] Although as a government teacher Beilby's confessional allegiance as a Baptist was not problematic for the Department of Education, it was a problem for the Moravian Church officials in Germany. They felt acutely the lack of input they had had in appointing a teacher to the school and suggested that 'It is an abnormal situation that the Government sends out teachers for the school without any further [discussion], this school is indeed seen to be a Government school.'^[34] Such comments hint at difficulties in the transition from a religious to a government school, especially from the side of the religious authority itself. The Moravian Church was concerned as to who would be responsible for the teaching of religion; the situation was resolved by Hagenauer taking on this responsibility and providing the requisite daily half hour of moral and religious training that all Indigenous pupils received in addition to secular class work.^[35]

From 1885, the date from which we can reconstruct the teaching staff of the Ramahyuck school through records held at PROV, the relationship between Beilby and Hagenauer had become strained. In mid-August, both Mr and Mrs Beilby were ill with influenza and the school had to be closed for a few days.^[36] In 1886, the length of illness was even longer, with a doctor prescribing four weeks' rest for Beilby as he was suffering a bout of dysphasia combined with mental depression. As no substitute was available, the school was closed again.^[37] Soon after returning from sick-leave Beilby applied to be transferred to a 'Seaside or Hill-country school residence, as a change has become desirable'.^[38] Yet his mental depression continued to plague him and in September of the same year he retracted his application for transfer, and instead tendered his resignation.^[39]

At this point, Hagenauer stepped in to ensure that he was to receive the teacher that he wanted, and not one that the Education Department might have sent. Although, as detailed above, the relationship between Hagenauer and Hahn had been strained, Hahn remained Hagenauer's preferred candidate. There had been other candidates for the position, including one Elizabeth Simpson, who, after making enquiries concerning the school in October, declined the offer of head teacher at Ramahyuck, stating that 'it would not be a desirable position for a lady'.^[40] Her comment can be read to reflect colonial concepts of female respectability. Earlier in that month, Hagenauer had forwarded Hahn's application to the Department urging it to grant him the favour of appointing Hahn as the head teacher, noting that 'An Aboriginal School is not suitable to many, for which reason we greatly desire to have Mr. Hahn reappointed to his former school.'^[41] Beilby even suggested to the Department that another candidate for the position, Mrs Temper, had been advised not to apply for the post, but rather for a position at Woranga School, which was where Hahn was currently employed.^[42] With Hagenauer's support, Hahn began teaching at Ramahyuck on 22 November 1886. Early in the following year, he complained to the Department that the children's school work had suffered because of Beilby's frequent bouts of illness.^[43]

However, he was soon also requesting a transfer, noting that the nightly din which was produced by Hagenauer's 'half-grown-up son'[44] and the 'black school children' was so unbearable that it was affecting his nerves. He further indicated that such annoyances were the cause of Beilby's breakdown, a comment that sheds light on the broader personal politics played out on the mission between Euro-Australians as well as between Euro-Australians and the Indigenous residents.[45] Hahn was not immediately removed, however; he became the half-time head teacher of the new Perry Bridge school (No. 2982), which serviced Euro-Australian children, whilst remaining half-time at Ramahyuck, serving Koorie children.[46] Perry Bridge was opened in October of 1889, with Hahn working alternative days at this and the Ramahyuck school. When both schools were reclassified in 1892,[47] Hahn became the full-time head teacher at Perry Bridge, and left the now unclassified, yet full-time school at Ramahyuck.[48]

The Teaching Staff of the De-classified School

Within the colony, the passing of the so-called 'Half-Caste Act' of 1886 had meant that only 'full blood' Aborigines were allowed to live on Aboriginal mission or government stations, and thus all people under the age of thirty-five, including children, not classified as 'full blood' under this law were required to leave these sites.[49] The consequence of this Act for the Ramahyuck school was that pupil numbers dropped substantially below the number needed to maintain a classified school, and, as an unclassified school, the teaching position became available to less qualified people.[50] It was not, however, just the dispersal of Indigenous people from the vicinity of the mission that reduced the number of pupils. According to a letter that Hahn sent to the Education Department, Hagenauer had been annoyed that some Aboriginal boys had followed white girls home, seeing this as a situation that could potentially reflect negatively upon the mission. In order to rectify this and to ensure that it would not happen again, he encouraged Euro-Australian children not to attend the government school, and thus curtailed potential enrolments.[51] In doing so Hagenauer also compromised the standard of teaching available at the school.

The first teacher at Ramahyuck following de-classification was Ida Vidler, who applied for and received the position in December 1891.[52] Like her predecessors, she also fell out of favour with Hagenauer. Furthermore, she fell out of favour with the Indigenous mothers of the school's pupils. After being only some six weeks in the position, a letter of complaint was sent to the Secretary of the Education Department, Thomas Brodribb, Esq. Signed by five women and written by one of the school's former teachers, Bessy Cameron (née Flower), the letter voiced the complaint that the two ladies who ran the school demoralised the Koorie children by saying such things as 'You horrible nasty creatures.' In protest the mothers had taken their children from the school and would not send them again until both teachers, Miss Vidler and Miss Moss, had been removed.[53] One mother, Emily Stephan, was particularly concerned that the bad language and behaviour of the teachers, and especially Vidler's willingness to discredit Hagenauer in front of the children, was setting a bad example.[54] Rather than Hagenauer forwarding these letters to Brodribb in his capacity as missionary, he did so on official letterhead of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines in his capacity as General Inspector of the Aborigines (a position he had held since 1889), thereby demonstrating his willingness to see this problem as a secular one and not a spiritual one.[55]

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After such a clash it is understandable that Vidler urgently wished to leave her post. She wrote to the Department in March 1892, enquiring if it were absolutely necessary for her to stay until a new teacher was appointed.[56] A replacement, in the form of the ex-teacher trainee Rachel Evans, was sent at the end of March. Although Evans had failed her teaching exams, she was deemed by Hagenauer to be 'highly suitable' for the position.[57] Her willingness to obtain the necessary teaching qualification was expressed in her desire to sit for the teaching exams in 1894. However, she noted in a letter to the Education Department that the 'somewhat peculiar' duties, including the monitoring of pupils at night, did not allow her sufficient free time for private study.[58] This comment also suggests that the moral supervision of Koorie children was seen as an important aspect of the teacher's position. Evans worked for almost two years at Ramahyuck before tendering her resignation. When her resignation – possibly motivated by her wish to attend to her dying father[59] – was accepted in April 1896, the teaching position became open once more.[60] For Hagenauer, it was imperative that a female fill the position. He wrote a letter to the Education Department, once again on Board letterhead, stating that 'at all the Schools for aboriginal children female teachers are more preferable than male teachers and [the] above Board will feel obliged for a similar appointment to the Ramahyuck School'.[61] Female teachers were less expensive to employ than male teachers,[62] and although Hagenauer was very cautious with both his own personal money and money for the mission under his care, it is doubtful that the extra expense of a male teacher would have been a reason for his request. Within schools for Native Americans in the United States of America, for example, more females were employed than males in the nineteenth century, not only because they were less expensive to hire, but also because teaching was seen to be a profession for which women were more broadly suitable, as they were deemed to be the bastions of moral virtue.[63] This may well have been the case with the Ramahyuck school; however, the letters of application do not provide any concrete evidence as to why women were driven to apply to teach at an Aboriginal school. As the applications are exclusively from females it may be assumed that teaching in an Aboriginal school in the nineteenth century was seen by teachers themselves to be a position best filled by women. Throughout the British (post)-colonial world, teaching was predominately a women's profession,[64] with schooling deemed a means by which Indigenous and non-European pupils could be taught 'civilising' habits within the school environment that would help them assimilate into the broader (post-) colonial society. Women, it was believed, had the inherent moral constitution to effect these changes. In this light, Hagenauer's desire to only employ female teachers was not anomalous, yet it was curious in its explicit nature.

In 1896, Elizabeth Armour took on the position of teacher at Ramahyuck with Hagenauer praising her in a letter to the Education Department as having been 'so well suited to manage the difficulties with aboriginal children'.[65] However, she only taught to the end of the year, with it being unclear as to why she left. Her replacement was Annie Seymour, who had previously taught at Camberwell (No. 888).[66] After two years of working at the Ramahyuck school, Seymour also requested a transfer to another school. Her letter of request to the Department reads in full:

Sir,

I have the honor to apply for a transfer from this school after the Christmas Vacation. I have now been two years in this aboriginal school and find the work of teaching the native children uphill, hard, trying and unsatisfactory.

That the work done has been careful, zealous, useful & hard, the results of the annual examination & the reports of the District Inspector will, I think, show.

I cannot undertake the work of this school after this year as it is too uphill & trying for me.

I wish to apply for the position of 8th class Assistant or of a Reliever.

*I have the honor to be,
Sir*

Seymour's letter hints at the difficulties that she faced working with Indigenous children. She was not alone in finding the position taxing, for, as the annual Board reports demonstrate, other female teachers on Aboriginal and mission stations also expressed similar sentiments, with the teaching of Indigenous children deemed to be particularly difficult work.[68] However, as Joanna Cruickshank has argued, Seymour not only found the teaching difficult, she was also pressured by Hagenauer's wife to resign from the post because of her close connection with an Indigenous man – a relationship deemed not suitable for a white lady.[69] Thus, once again, colonial ideas of respectability affected the staffing of the school. With Seymour's transfer in force, yet another teacher was sought. Elizabeth Harper Armour, who had previously worked at the Ramahyuck school, returned at the beginning of 1899 to take charge.[70] When members of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines visited the station in early 1899, they were so impressed with Armour's teaching work that they wished a half-day holiday to be granted. However, as they did not have the jurisdiction over state schools to grant holidays, their request was presented to the Education Department. The file is inconclusive as to whether the holiday was granted or not.[71] Armour herself applied to the Education Department for the granting of two bank holidays a couple months later on the occasion of the marriage of Hagenauer's daughter, Ellen Grace, to Ernest Le Souef, the son of Albert Alexander Le Souef, member of the Board for the Protection of Aborigines. It would be, she urged, 'a great festivity in which the the [sic] black children will bear a part', and as such, 'I am applying for the two days. The Wednesday 19th is for decorating & preparation & the next day 20th April is the day of the ceremony.' The Department, however, saw this as being excessive and granted only the day of the ceremony.[72]

In October of that year, Armour requested a month's relief duty in Melbourne, where her sister, who was about to get married, lived. As her sister was to relocate to China after her wedding, Armour was keen to spend at least five weeks with her.[73] By June of 1900, Armour had, like many of her predecessors, reached a point of physical exhaustion. She suffered from 'Anaemia & Delicly [sic]' and was required by a physician to spend at least a month convalescing, which ultimately extended to three.[74] Hagenauer was concerned that a temporary 'suitable female' teacher should be sent 'without delay', as it was deemed 'very desirable to keep the children at their regular work'.[75] A temporary female teacher in the form of Edith Brotchie was sent at the end of September 1900.[76]

As teachers were, however, paid partly on examination results, Armour was very desirous that her illness would not affect her payment. She wrote to the Board in December 1900 applying for special consideration:

Sir,

I have the honor to inform you that my annual exam for results has been lately held, and that the percentage dropped from last year. As the school was closed for three month on account of my illness & considering how easily the aborigines forget in a very short time, I herewith apply to be paid on my last years percentage 85.

This is the third examination since I have been teaching at this school, & in no other instance has the percentage fallen, it has always risen.

The percentage this year is 80.7.

*I have the honor to be sir,
your obedient servant,
Elizabeth H. Armour [77]*

Unlike her application for two bank holidays, this application was granted. Although the file recording the correspondence between teachers and the Board of Education ends in 1901, an epilogue can, nevertheless, be

pieced together from information available in the annual Board reports. As mentioned above, the introduction of the so-called 'Half-Caste' Act had a great impact on the number of students at the school, as government regulations ensured that only 'full-blooded' Aborigines were able to live on the station, consequently decreasing the numbers of pupils. With only twelve students left in 1901, the Department of Education closed the school. The Board stepped in and appointed 'one of the educated native women to carry on the school', with this nameless woman maintaining the programme of the Department of Education for the next four years.[78] In 1905, the Department of Education re-established the Ramahyuck school. Hagenauer's request of 1898 was not heeded, for a male teacher was employed.[79]

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the ways in which the archives at PROV can shed light on the institutional as well as the personal experiences of teachers at schools through a reading of their letters of application and requests for transfer. It is thus more than a list of dissatisfied teachers leaving the Ramahyuck school due to altercations with the head missionary. The Ramahyuck school was unusual in the history of the colony of Victoria in that it was one of only a handful of schools that educated predominantly Indigenous pupils. Yet, in the context of those schools connected to Aboriginal reserves or missions in colonial Victoria, Ramahyuck was not unique. Other Aboriginal reserves and missions struggled with disruption of teaching staff; other schools taught both Euro-Australian and Indigenous children; and other schools also obtained good percentages at the annual examinations.[80] By reading the correspondence to the Board of Education we gain an insight into the particularities of these commonalities. The article has demonstrated the amount of meddling undertaken in education affairs by the head missionary at Ramahyuck as well as the physical, emotional and mental pressures to which the teachers at the school were subjected. It has also demonstrated how colonial concepts of respectability affected who taught at the school. Moreover, although the voices of Koorie children are missing from the file, the voices of outraged parents indicate the importance of education for Indigenous communities.

The education of Aboriginal children was, as Amanda Barry has argued, not 'a single project with a single aim'. [81] The Ramahyuck school had begun as a mission school primarily aimed at drawing pupils to Christ through teaching them to read the Bible. Over the decades, the school became more secular in its staffing, no longer being taught by missionaries, rather by Department of Education teachers. The curriculum also became more secular, with the daily half hour of moral and religious training held outside of regular, secular school hours. In a broader sense, the file on Ramahyuck school, combined with external sources, reveals the complexities of negotiating both personal and institutional goals within and between the strictures of missionary organisations, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines, and the Department of Education. Whether similar experiences defined the histories of other mission and government reserves remains to be fully revealed. The records at PROV provide potentially unparalleled insights into these schools and their fascinating histories.

Table 1: Teachers at the Ramahyuck mission school, 1864-1901

Name	Appointment date	Leaving date	Reason given for leave / transfer
Hagenauer, Friedrich	1862	1864	Kramer took over position
Kramer, Carl Christian Wilhelm	1864	1866	Mission work at Lake Lake Kopperamanna in the interior of Australia
Flower, Bessy	1866	1868	Married and replaced by Kramer
Kramer, Carl Christian Wilhelm	1869	1875	Transferred to Ebenezer Mission station in the Wimmera
Hahn, Heinrich A.	Feb. 1876	Dec. 1879	Difficulties with Hagenauer
Beilby, Christopher	1880	Resigned, Sept. 20, 1886	Mental depression
Hahn, Heinrich A.	22 Nov. 1886	1891	Requested transfer away from station

Vidler, Ida	18 Jan. 1892	14 March 1892	Removed for rude behaviour
Moss, Miss	?	?	Removed for rude behaviour
Evens, Rachel	28 March 1892	12 April 1896	Wished to look after dying father
Armour, Elizabeth H.	13 April 1893	18 Dec. 1896	Temporary teacher, not fully qualified
Seymour, Annie	18 Jan. 1897	16 Dec. 1898	Conditions too difficult
Armour, Elizabeth H.	24 Jan. 1899	Dec. 1900?	
Brotchie, Edith	13 Sept. 1900	24 Sept. 1900	Temporary teacher, filling in for Armour

Endnotes

[1]. National Archives Australia, Victorian Branch, B[230], General correspondence, [77a], Secretary, Education Department, Melbourne, to FA Hagenauer, Secretary, Board for the Protection of the Aborigines, 4 October 1898.

[2]. C Bowden, 'The East Gippsland region', in LJ Blake (ed.), *Vision and realisation: a centenary history of state education in Victoria*, Education Department of Victoria, Melbourne, 1973, vol. 3, p. 1073.

[3]. An exception is Amanda Barry's PhD thesis, 'Broken promises: Aboriginal education in south-eastern Australia, 1837-1937', School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne, 2008.

[4]. Exceptions are: Barry, 'Broken promises' and AR Welch, 'Aboriginal education as internal colonialism: the schooling of an Indigenous minority in Australia', *Comparative education*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1988, pp. 203-15.

[5]. For a plausible reconstruction of surrounding events, see R Kenny, *The lamb enters the Dreaming: Nathanael Pepper and the ruptured world*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2007.

[6]. For an overview of the Moravians' work in Australia see F Jenz, *German Moravian missionaries in the British Colony of Victoria, Australia, 1848-1908: influential strangers*, Brill, Leiden, 2010.

[7]. [AG Spangenberg], *Instructions for the members of the Unitas Fratrum, who minister in the Gospel among the heathen*, Brethren's Society, for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, London, 1784, p. 47.

[8]. M Haller, *Early Moravian education in Pennsylvania*, Moravian Historical Society, Nazareth, Pennsylvania, 1953, p. 213.

[9]. For an overview of this mission see Jenz, *German Moravian missionaries*, pp. 155-73.

[10]. B Attwood, '... In the name of all my coloured brethren and sisters: a biography of Bessy Cameron', *Hecate: a women's interdisciplinary journal*, vol. 12, nos. 1-2, 1986, pp. 9-53.

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[12]. National Library of Australia [NLA], manuscript 3343, Hagenauer Letterbook, Hagenauer to Mackie (South Yarra), [date illegible] 1867, pp. 163-5.

[13]. *ibid.*, Hagenauer to Reichel (Herrnhut, Germany), 1 May 1866, pp. 52-4.

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- [15]. For an overview see JR Miller, *Shingwauk's vision: a history of native residential schools*, University of Toronto Press, 2009.
- [16]. JS Scott, 'Penitential and penitentiary: Native Canadians and colonial mission education', in *Mixed messages: materiality, textuality, missions*, ed. JS Scott and G Griffiths, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2005, pp. 111-33 (117).
- [17]. Bessy Cameron, writing from Ebenezer, to Captain Page, Secretary, Board for the Protection of Aborigines (Melbourne), 10 October 1883, cited in *Letters from Aboriginal women of Victoria, 1867-1926*, p. 153. See also P Grimshaw, 'Faith, missionary life, and the family', in P Levine (ed.), *Gender and empire*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp. 260-80.
- [18]. *Seventh report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1871, p. 3. These reports have been digitised and are available on the [website](#) of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.
- [19]. Hagenauer, examined 23 May 1877, Minutes of Evidence, 'Royal Commission on the Aborigines', *Victorian parliamentary papers*, 1877, p. 36, quoted in Barry, *Broken promises*, p. 111.
- [20]. For an exemplary case, see Hagenauer's discussion of his difficulties with the missionary Hahn in NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Connor (Herrnhut, Germany), 27 October 1879, pp. 433-60.
- [21]. Hagenauer, examined 23 May 1877, Minutes of Evidence, 'Royal Commission on the Aborigines', 1877, p. 48.
- [22]. NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Reichel, 29 February 1868, p. 244.
- [23]. *Twenty-first report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1885, p. 7.
- [24]. State Library of Victoria, Manuscript file 10401, Inspector's register book, 1871-1874, Ramahyuck School, n.p.
- [25]. *ibid.*
- [26]. JE Hutton, *A history of Moravian missions*, Moravian Publications Office, London, 1922, p. 345.
- [27]. See AH Keane, 'The Australian and Tasmanian races'. [Review of *The Aborigines of Victoria, with notes relating to the habits of the natives of other parts of Australia and Tasmania*, compiled from various sources for the Government of Victoria by R Brough Smyth, FLS, FGS, &c., 2 vols, Trübner and Co., London, 1878], *Nature*, vol. XIX, no. 494, 1879, p. 551; B Kidd, *Social evolution*, Macmillan and Co., New York and London, 1895, p. 295.
- [28]. *Twelfth report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1876, p. 4; *Twenty-seventh report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1891, p. 4.
- [29]. NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Connor, 10 September 1879, pp 427-8.
- [30]. Barry, *Broken promises*, p. 120.
- [31]. NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Connor, 27 October 1879, pp. 433-60.
- [32]. NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Bechler (Herrnhut, Germany), 13 January 1880, p. 467.
- [33]. NLA, MS 3343, Hagenauer to Bechler, 12 May 1880, p. 477.
- [34]. Unitäts Archiv, Herrnhut, Protocoll der Missionsdepartement, 11 February 1880, #7, pp. 74-5.

- [35]. *Seventeenth report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1881, p. 8.
- [36]. PROV, VPRS 640/P0 Central Inward Primary Schools Correspondence, Unit 657 School No. 1088, Item 1885/26580, Hagenauer to Secretary of the Department of Education, 21 August 1885. All subsequent items of correspondence cited are from this file.
- [37]. Item 1886/1988, Med[ical] Cert[ificate] on behalf of CA Beilby signed by Matthew McLean, 18 July 1886.
- [38]. Item 1886/32050, CA Beilby to Secretary [Ed. Dept], 30 August 1886.
- [39]. Item 1886/34368, Beilby to Secretary [Ed. Dept], 20 September 1886.
- [40]. Item 1886/38675, Elizabeth Simpson to Ed. Dept, 20 October 1886.
- [41]. Item 1886/36845, HA Hahn (1562) applies for H. Tship., 5 October 1886, Forwarded by FA Hagenauer, 7 October 1886.
- [42]. Item 1886/38385, Beilby to Secretary [Ed. Dept], 19 October 1886.
- [43]. Item 1887/525, Hahn to Ed. Dept, 19 February 1887.
- [44]. Hagenauer had nine children. Exactly which child is being referred to here is unclear. See LJ Blake, 'Hagenauer, Friedrich August (1829-1909)', in *Australian dictionary of biography online*.
- [45]. Item 1888/8648, Hahn to Secretary [Ed. Dept], 17 March 1888.
- [46]. Item 1889/44732, Hahn to Secretary [Ed. Dept], 29 October 1889.
- [47]. For information about the classification system see E Sweetman, CR Long and J Smyth, *A history of state education in Victoria*, published for the Education Department of Victoria by Critchley Parker, Melbourne, 1922, pp. 98-102.
- [48]. Bowden, 'The East Gippsland region', pp. 1107-08; see also *Twenty-ninth report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1882, p. 9.
- [49]. *The Aborigines Protection Act*, 1886 (50 Vict. No. 912).
- [50]. Item 1891/66706, Notice, Ramahyuck, Registered 23 December 1891.
- [51]. Item 1888/8648, Hahn to Secretary, Education Department, 17 March 1888.
- [52]. Item 1891/66828, Ida Vidler to Secretary, Education Department, 22 December 1891.
- [53]. Item 1892/8131, Petition signed by Bessy Cameron, Florance Moffat, Mary Scott, Emily M. Stephen, Lulu Darby to J Brodribb Esq, 27 February 1892.
- [54]. Item 1892/8131, EM Stephan to Miss Moss and Miss Vidler, 25 February 1892.
- [55]. Item 1892/8131, Hagenauer to Brodribb, Secretary Department of Education, 1 March 1892.
- [56]. Item 1892/9715, Vidler to Secretary, Education Department, 10 March 1892.
- [57]. Item 1894/35580, Hagenauer to Secretary of Education Department, 1 November 1894.
- [58]. Item 1894/35580, Rachel Evans to Secretary of Education Department, 30 October 1894.
- [59]. Item 1895/40097, Evans to Secretary of Education Department, 11 December 1895.

- [60]. Item 1896/6953, Evans to Secretary of Education Department, 13 March 1896.
- [61]. Item 1896/21534, Hagenauer to Secretary of Education Department, 20 March 1896.
- [62]. Sweetman, Long and Smyth, *A history of state education in Victoria*, p. 106.
- [63]. DW Adams, *Education for extinction: American Indians and the boarding school experience, 1875-1928*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995, p. 81.
- [64]. In Canada, for example, by 1880 two-thirds of teachers in the public sector were female. See J Guildford, '“Separate spheres”: the feminization of public school teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838-1880', *Acadiensis*, vol. 22, no. 1, Autumn 1992, pp. 44-64 (44).
- [65]. Item 1896/21543, Hagenauer to Secretary of Education Department, 24 July 1896.
- [66]. Item 1897/142, Hagenauer to Secretary of Education Department, 7 January 1897.
- [67]. Item 1898/4188, Annie Seymour to Secretary of Education Department, 30 November 1898.
- [68]. See for example *Thirty-fifth report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines*, Robt S Brain, Melbourne, 1899, p. 9.
- [69]. J Cruickshank, '“A most lowering thing for a lady”: aspiring to respectable whiteness on Ramahyuck Mission', in C McLisky and J Carey (eds), *Creating White Australia*, Sydney University Press, 2009, pp. 80-96.
- [70]. Item 1899/1151, Cover notes, 23 January 1899.
- [71]. Item 1899/5922, Albert Le Sou[e]f (vice Chairman), RR Godfrey, [?] Whitehead, MP, FA Hagenauer, Secretary, 24 February 1899.
- [72]. Item 1899/10589, Armour to Board of Advice, 11 April 1899.
- [73]. Item 1899/30211, Armour to Secretary of Education Department, 11 September 1899; Item 1899/32836, Armour to Secretary of Education Department, 2 October 1899.
- [74]. Item 1900/31093, Doctor certificate, 25 August 1900; Item 1900/21383, Note on back of letter from Armour to Secretary of Education Department, 26 June 1900.
- [75]. Item 1900/21708, Hagenauer to Secretary of Education Department, 29 June 1900.
- [76]. Item 1900/33726, Department file, 13 September 1900.
- [77]. Item 1900/47633, Armour to Secretary of Education Board, 12 December 1900.
- [78]. *Forty-first report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1905, p. 9.
- [79]. This was Mr E Geissler: see *ibid*.
- [80]. For an example of the disruption of teaching staff see *Twenty-first report of the Board...*, p. 8; *Twenty-seventh report of the Board...*, 1891, p. 7. For an example of mixed classes of both Euro-Australian and Indigenous children see *Twentieth report of the Board for the Protection of the Aborigines in the colony of Victoria*, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1884, p. 7; *Twenty-ninth report of the Board...*, p. 9. Both Coranderk and Ebenezer reported Euro-Australian and Indigenous pupils studying together. For an example of the obtainment of good percentages at the annual examinations see *Twenty-ninth report...*, p. 9.
- [81]. Barry, *Broken promises*, p. i.